

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 02047 200643Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 IO-14 PA-02 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 AID-05 DODE-00 /049 W
-----058857 200646Z /10

R 200527Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2735
INFO AMEMBASSY GANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

UNCLAS CANBERRA 2047

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES - AUSTRALIA TO ADMIT MORE REFUGEES
AND INCREASE UN REFUGEE FUNDING

1. MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS MACKELLAR ANNOUNCED
MARCH 16 THAT AUSTRALIA HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT AN ADDITIONAL 2000
REFUGEES BY THE END OF JUNE.

2. HE ALSO STATED THAT AUSTRALIA HAD SET UP A COMMITTEE TO HANDLE
APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE IN OR ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA SEEKING
REFUGEE STATUS. NEW PROCEDURE WOULD ENSURE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS
OF PROTECTION UNDER THE UN CONVENTION COVERING REFUGEES. THE NEW
COMMITTEE WILL LIAISE WITH THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEES TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF APPLICANTS ARE PROTECTED.

3. ON MARCH 19, 1978, FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK STATED AUSTRALIA
HAD MADE A CASH GRANT OF 1.3 MILLION DOLLARS AVAILABLE TO HELP
INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. THE GRANT WILL GO TO THE UNHCR FOR THE
SPECIAL 1978 PROGRAM FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND AND
OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES.

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4. IN MAKING THE ANNOUNCEMENT, MR. PEACOCK IS REPORTED
TO HAVE SAID, "IT IS BELIEVED MAINTENANCE OF SUITABLE RECEPTION
FACILITIES IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES WILL DISCOURAGE REFUGEES IN
BOATS MAKING THEIR OWN WAY TO AUSTRALIA".

5. AUSTRALIA WILL ALSO MAKE A SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTION OF 200,000
DOLLS. TO THE UN COMMISSION'S 1978 WORLD-WIDE GENERAL PROGRAM.

6. NEW ADMISSION PROGRAM AND GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS COINCIDED WITH VISIT OF UN HIGH COMMISSIONER HARTLING. THEY REFLECT AUSTRALIA'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO DISSUADE REFUGEES FROM ATTEMPTING TO REACH AUSTRALIA BY BOAT BY TAKING MEASURES TO INSURE MORE RAPID ADMISSION THROUGH RECOGNIZED PROCEDURES AND TO ALLEVIATE SOME OF WORST FEATURES OF REFUGEE CAMP LIFE.

ALSTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CANBER02047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780122-0216
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780349/aaaabouw.tel
Line Count: 70
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cd54f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3272532
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES - AUSTRALIA TO ADMIT MORE REFUGEES AND INCREASE UN REFUGEE FUNDING
TAGS: SREF, VM, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cd54f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014